

Point Shilshole Condominium Information for New Residents

Note: this document has been prepared by George Brengelmann, Unit #1, in response to suggestions and requests from owners. The intent is to make available a short “user’s manual” to introduce new owners to most of the things they need to know to get started living here. In its present form, it has not been approved by the board, nor the owners. It may not correctly and accurately reflect the history of the building nor statements of the official documents recorded for the Point Shilshole Condominium,

- C, C and R's.

The documents provided in the sale spell out information owners need to know. Consult them for the authoritative statements about the property, responsibilities of owners versus the association, etc. The following list is provided as a “user’s manual” with the intent of answering questions that new owners typically ask.

- Keys and security

When the building was new, residents needed only a key for the front door and one for their unit. The unit key also fit the mailbox. Since, various doors have been re-keyed and some have had deadbolts installed, so you might have the worst case of four separate keys: front entrance, mailbox, plus two for your door.

The front door key also fits the gate to the covered parking area, the door in the utility area near the garbage dumpsters, and the door at the northwest corner of the pool building.

Copies of keys are kept in a locked strongbox, accessible by the manager and members of the board. In case of fire, flood, etc., your unit may need to be entered while you are away. Therefore, it's imperative that you provide a copy of a key for any new or re-keyed locks.

The front door is often blocked open for the convenience of movers, work crews, or even owners. The door is fitted with a brass rectangle that loops over a fixed hook and keeps the door wide open. Using this is fine if someone keeps watch while getting a load from the parking lot, but otherwise not. Owners don't want the security of the building breached by having the door left open while whoever blocked it is off somewhere in the building.

Partly to avoid having the door blocked open, owners have given front door keys to outsiders who need access. Anyone with a key can easily have it duplicated. Given the ease of proliferation of keys plus the frequent occasions on which the front door is blocked open, the front door cannot be regarded as secure. Some owners have installed alarm systems.

In late 2005, a new door entry and intercom was installed. This enables opening the front door remotely (see below for more on the intercom system) from your unit. Also, entering a 4-digit code in the keypad next to the front door will unlock it. The system also has the capability for activation by a key fob like those used for automobile entry, but this has not been activated, pending requests from owners.

- Intercom

The present intercom system replaced the original system that had become impossible to maintain after over 20 years of service. If you wish to remove the obsolete box, it is simply a matter of unscrewing the screw concealed under the hand piece and unplugging the connector on the end of the bunch of wires between the unit and the receptacle. This leaves a rectangular recess you can cover with drywall. If you have this done by a technician, it would be good to leave the internal wiring intact in the event we may wish to use the TV cable or other connections in the future.

The intercom system displays an image from a camera at the front door on channel 123 of our cable system. When someone wants to get in, they need to use the keypad to find your name and then cause the system to dial your phone number. While you are connected, you can push 9 on your telephone keypad to open the door.

You can open the front door with your key or by entering a four-digit code on the console at the front entry. You can give this code to those you would otherwise give a key. If you want to activate a temporary code to give access to someone for a limited time, inform the Board secretary or the manager.

- Fire alarm.

This system was upgraded in fall 2005. Detectors in the halls and in each unit are wired into a monitored system. If a detector is activated, a loud siren goes off in each unit and the fire department is called automatically. We are required to leave the building.

Two detectors were installed in each unit's entrance hallway. Only one is wired into the system. It is heat-activated. The other is a battery-powered smoke detector intended for a local warning only. In this way, the frequent false alarms of the past due to paint fumes, dust, and inconsequential smoke (burning toast, etc) have been eliminated.

The detectors in the hallways are smoke detectors. Owners need to be aware that the hallway **smoke detectors are sensitive** to paint fumes and clouds of dust. Painters need to be warned of the potential problem. They may also need to cover detectors in the hall.

- Shared vents for dryers.

Except for the end units (6, 12, 18, 24), dryers in each stack of units share a common vent with a single fan on the roof, i.e., your dryer connects to a vent pipe that is shared by the three other dryers in the units above and below yours. The dryer receptacles have been wired to switch on the roof fan when you switch on your dryer. So far, the system has been fault free, but be aware of it. There is no indication that the roof fan is actually running, but if the automatic circuit should fail, you will notice dryer exhaust from other floors back-flowing through your dryer.

If an electrician needs to work on the wiring in your laundry area, they need to be aware that the wire to the switch could become live if someone above or below turns on their switch.

- Shared vents for bathrooms

Again with the exception of the end units, bathroom vents share a vertical stack. We have two types of bathroom vents. You will note that one or two bathrooms in your unit are vented with their own fan that switches on when you turn on the light. The fan motors are audible in the other units, so they need to be turned off when not needed.

Bathrooms vents such as those near the front entry in the two bedroom units are powered by a single fan on the roof, like the dryer vent system. The roof fan is turned on when your bathroom fan switch is turned on, or when the corresponding switch is turned on in any of the units above or below you. Since the roof motor cannot be heard in units below the fourth floor, people on the lower floors sometimes forget and leave the fan switch on, creating an annoying noise for their upstairs neighbor. A technical fix for this problem is in prospect: installation of timer switches in place of the present fan switches.

- Parking.

Each unit is allotted one space in the covered area. The number of the space does not correspond to the number of the unit. Additionally, the spaces along the hedge on the north border of the property belong to us. Unfortunately, they are too few to accommodate owner's second cars, let alone guests. We are entitled to share the parking "island" of spaces just opposite our front entrance, but do not have the right to exclusive access. Quite commonly, vehicles that have no business in our reserved area park there. Occasionally, both our reserved area and the "island" are full during business hours. Evenings and weekends have not been a problem.

Plainly marked on our curb is a no-parking zone reserved for fire truck access. Vehicles in the parking island must not block the fire lane, i.e., the whole circumference of the island. Besides blocking access for fire trucks, it also interferes with access for the garbage and recycling trucks.

- Pool

State-imposed safety rules are posted on signs in the pool room. A cell phone, limited to calling 911, is kept in the closet. Water chemistry is monitored and adjusted by our maintenance person who also cleans the pool and spa.

Children need to be supervised. Apart from the safety consideration, we have had expensive damage to the pool cover when children jumped on it, and destruction of the floating spa cover by children fascinated by popping the bubbles.

To use the pool, the sliding cover needs to be retracted. The switch is on the south wall, near the west corner. The detectors intended to stop the winding apparatus have been known to fail, making it possible to damage the cover, so users need to keep an eye on the cover and release the switch if the cover does not stop at the mark, both on retracting and closing.

The roof sections of the pool building retract. You'll find switches on the motor control boxes overhead at roughly the middle of the east and west walls.

Humidity is a problem. It builds rapidly when the pool and/or spa are uncovered. If you forget to cover them when you leave, destructive levels of moisture accumulation build up in a few hours. It's best to provide some ventilation whenever using either the pool or the spa. Opening the sliding door helps a lot, opening one of the roof sections is even better.

There's not much of a path, and part of it is a hazardous mess of ivy over rocks, but if you are willing to accept the risk, you can get to the beach via the sliding door in the pool room. You're on our property as far as the beach, which is open to the public. You can reduce the sand kids bring back into the pool room if you get the large bucket out of the pool closet, fill it with nice warm water from the spa, and sluice them off while they're still outside.

- Balconies

The metal brackets that support the fascia boards outside each balcony were originally intended to support specially made flower boxes. These turned out to be a nuisance because of the various things that dribbled down. Owners voted to remove the flower boxes and prohibit having any plantings supported on the metal bracket system. Any pots, baskets, or what have you, should be within the balcony area.

The fascia boards conceal a drain system connected to holes at floor level in each balcony. This accommodates rain, wash water, spills from flower pots, etc. Owners need to keep an eye open for possible blockage of the drain holes and attached pipe and inform the manager if they need to be cleaned.

- Garbage and recycling.

Access to the garbage chute is in the closet at the east end of each hallway. To keep the chute clean, please put garbage in sturdy bags and close them securely. Stuff to be recycled can be left in the boxes below the chute doors. Or, you can take it down to the utility area behind the gate to the right of our entrance as you go out (blue dumpsters for all but glass, separate bins for glass).

Everyday accumulation completely fills the dumpster under the garbage chute by pickup time. We have two dumpsters, one emptied on Monday, the other on Thursday. If you carry something to be disposed of down to the garbage area, please do not put it in the reserve dumpster. It has to be empty when the maintenance person swaps it in on the pickup morning. For bulky exceptional items, please consult our maintenance man. Construction debris should be hauled away. A transfer station is nearby, east of Stoneway Ave., on N. 34th street.

For hazardous waste, e.g., rechargeable batteries, paint, fluorescent bulbs, please arrange with the maintenance person who will periodically make trips to the north-end disposal site.

- Plumbing, drains, and in-sink disposal units

In-sink disposal units were installed in the original construction. These do not grind sufficiently fine. The debris can cause blockage of drains, particularly if combined with kitchen grease. Many disposal units have been replaced. They work better, but we have had blockage in the drains on the ground floor caused by accumulation of debris bonded by kitchen grease. To minimize problems, please dispose of as much debris as possible in the garbage and use the disposal unit only for sink cleanup.

Please do not pour kitchen grease down the drain.

The drains in units above the first floor all lead vertically down to join with the drain from the unit immediately below. Drains in the outside wall turn to run horizontally below the floor of ground floor units. If one of these long runs is blocked, they back up through the lowest drain in the ground floor unit, often the kitchen sink. We have these long drains cleaned prophylactically. However, residents of ground floor units should be alert to evidence of partial blockage, such as slow-running kitchen drains and new gurgling noises and inform the manager.

Anyone planning to be away should arrange to have the unit checked to make sure of no leaks or overflows. Closing your main water supply valve will reduce the likelihood of floods, e.g., from burst washing machine hoses. If you do turn off your water pressure, be sure to turn off the water heaters.

If you need to have a plumber work on your fixtures or drains, please consider using the service the condominium is using since they are familiar with the building. You can get the contact information from our manager.

- Shared equipment.

Carts and dollies for use by residents are kept in the bottom of the east stairway. Also located there are a pressure washer and shop-size vacuum cleaner. These are for use by the maintenance person. The vacuum can be used by anyone in case a water spill needs to be dealt with. The pressure washer should not be used by anyone who has not been schooled in its use – it is easily damaged, and can injure the user or bystanders.